

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

CAB-05 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 CIEP-02 FAA-00 IO-13

MCT-01 SY-05 USSS-00 /102 W

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R 141117Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4916

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

FAA BRUSSELS

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR, US

SUBJ: CIVAIR: GISCARD AND PONIATOWSKI STATEMENTS ON
TWA HIJACKING

1. ACCORDING AFP, ELYSEE PRESS SPOKESMAN ON SEPT. 13
ISSUED FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT GISCARD
D'ESTAING ON TWA HIJACKING: "THE ORDERS TO ACT FIRMLY
DURING THE RECENT HIJACKING, AND WHICH WERE PERFECTLY
IMPLEMENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND BY THE MINISTER OF THE
INTERIOR, WILL HENCEFORTH APPLY IN ANY SIMILAR OPERATION
ATTEMPTED ON FRENCH TERRITORY." AFP REPORTS THAT PRIOR
TO ISSUING STATEMENT GISCARD
HAD MET WITH MINISTER OF INTERIOR PONIATOWSKI WHO HAD
REPORTED TO HIM ON THE OPERATIONS LEADING UP TO
HIJACKERS' SURRENDER.

2. LE MONDE OF SEPT. 14 QUOTES STATEMENT WHICH
MINISTER OF INTERIOR PONIATOWSKI GAVE TO
AFP ON SEPT. 11 SHORTLY AFTER HIJACKERS' SURRENDER:
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"ACTS OF AIR TERRORISM ARE MORE AND MORE FREQUENTLY

IMPERILLING THE LIVES OF INNOCENT PASSENGERS AND CREW MEMBERS. AS OF 8 PM, I GAVE THE ORDER TO IMMOBILIZE THE AIRCRAFT BY PUTTING ITS LANDING GEAR OUT OF COMMISSION, AND I COMMUNICATED TO THE HIJACKERS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE: 'YOUR AIRCRAFT CAN NO LONGER TAKE OFF. YOU ARE CONSIDERED TO BE PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LIVES OF THE PASSENGERS AND CREW MEMBERS. YOU THEREFORE HAVE THE CHOICE BETWEEN TWO SOLUTIONS: BE EXECUTED IF YOU MAKE ANY ATTEMPT ON THE LIVES OF YOUR HOSTAGES OR SURRENDER TO THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES TO BE IMMEDIATELY EXPELLED (FROM FRANCE). THESE CONDITIONS ARE IRREVOCABLE.' THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE PRIME MINISTER WERE CONSTANTLY KEPT INFORMED OF DECISIONS AND MEASURES PLANNED." (COMMENT: ABOVE MESSAGE DOES NOT QUITE CORRESPOND TO MESSAGE CONVEYED TO HIJACKERS AND AS REPORTED BY US IN TELCON TO FAA AND DEPT. TWA MANAGING DIRECTOR NICHOLS, WHO WAS ASKED TO READ MESSAGE IN ENGLISH TO THE HIJACKERS BY RADIO, CONFIRMS THAT IT WAS IN SUBSTANCE AS FOLLOWS: TIRES OF AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN DEFLATED. HIJACKERS HAD THREE CHOICES: (1) BE KILLED ON THE SPOT IF THEY HARMED PASSENGERS OR CREW MEMBERS; (2) SURRENDER TO US AUTHORITIES; (3) SURRENDER TO YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES. THIS HAS SINCE FURTHER BEEN CONFIRMED BY NBC TAPE RECORDING THAT WAS SUBJECT OF AP STORY SEPT. 13.)

3. ACCORDING TO AFP, DURING THE EVENING OF SEPT. 11 THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FRENCH AIRLINE PILOTS MADE A DEMARCHE TO PONIATOWSKI ASKING THAT NO ACTION BE TAKEN BY FRENCH SECURITY FORCES THAT COULD IMPERIL THE LIVES OF THE PASSENGERS ON THE HIJACKED AIRCRAFT. SPOKESMAN FOR THE ASSOCIATION SAID HE HAD ALSO BEEN IN TOUCH WITH TWA REPS IN CDG CONTROL TOWER WHO WERE

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ENTIRELY OF THE SAME OPINION. SPOKESMAN SAID THAT POSITION OF ASSOCIATION WAS TO OPPOSE ANY OPERATION THAT MIGHT ENDANGER THE LIVES OF THE HOSTAGES AND THE MERE FACT OF IMMOBILIZING THE AIRCRAFT (AS THE GOF HAD DONE) WAS DANGEROUS.

4. FRENCH TV, RADIO AND PRESS HAVE IN GENERAL PORTRAYED HAPPY OUTCOME OF THE HIJACKING AS VICTORY FOR GOF'S POLICY OF FIRMNESS. DURING TV REPORT EVENING SEPT. 12 ON OUTCOME OF HIJACKING, COMMENTATOR REFERRED TO ABOVE POSITION TAKEN BY AIRLINE PILOTS' ASSOCIATION AS ONLY "DISCORDANT" NOTE IN THE WHOLE AFFAIR. HOWEVER, POSITION OF PILOTS' ASSOCIATION WAS CARRIED AS STRAIGHT NEWS STORY ON SEPT. 14 AM RADIO NEWSCAST.

5. ARTICLE IN FRANCE-SOIR OF SEPT. 14 NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT HIJACKING ATTEMPT COULD HAVE FINISHED DISASTROUSLY UNCLASSIFIED

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AS RESULT OF HARD LINE TAKEN BY GOF, SINCE GOF, NOT KNOWING THAT HIJACKERS DID NOT HAVE EXPLOSIVES, ITSELF CHOSE TO RISK THE LIVES OF THE HOSTAGES. THIS WAS, SAID FRANCE-SOIR, A POLITICAL DECISION. WOULD THE GOF HAVE SHOWN THE SAME FIRMNESS AND THE SAME COURAGE IF IT HAD BEEN AN AIR FRANCE AIRCRAFT HAVING FRENCH PASSENGERS AND CREW ON BOARD, ASKS FRANCE-SOIR, ADDING THAT IT WOULD BE INSULTING TO THE GOF TO SUSPECT THAT ITS ATTITUDE WAS DETERMINED BY THE NATIONALITY OF THE AIRCRAFT, THE PASSENGERS, AND THE HIJACKERS. IN THAT CASE, CONCLUDES FRANCE-SOIR, THE GOF STANCE IN THIS INCIDENT CONSTITUTES A PRECEDENT WHICH

WOULD SEEM TO RULE OUT FOR THE FUTURE ANY POSSIBILITY
OF TAKING A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE IN SIMILAR INCIDENTS,
REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE RISKS.
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